(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) and (b) Reports in the media attributing a statement on the nature of the Pokhran test of 1974 to a former Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission have come to the notice of the Government. The Government reiterates that the Pokhran test of 1974 was a peaceful nuclear explosion experiment. While a nuclear weapon test and a peaceful nuclear explosion experiment use devices designed on the basis of the same physics principles, the packaging and detonation methodologies are different.

Killing of Myanmarcse Security Personnel

938. SHRI YEERA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the incident in which four Myanmarcse security personnel were killed at Morch-Tamu border on October 12, 1997;

(b) Whether Myanmar authorities have protested over the incident and demanded talks between Governor of Sa-gain and Chief Minister of Manipur; and

(c) Whether such talks have taken place; if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMALA SINHA): (a) to (c) In an incident on the night of 11th and 12th October, 1997 a group of armed miscreants set on fire the Namphalong market place at Tamu on the Myanmar side of the Indo-Myanmar border, opposite Moreh in Manipur.

Government of Myanmar have expressed deep concern over the incident of 12th October, 97 stating that Kuki insurgents were involved in the incident and that they entered Myanmar from Moreh and later returned to the Indian territory. According to the Government of Myanmar, two market security personnel and one immigration official were injured and 365 shops were burnt down and destroyed. Government of India have also seen reports that the so-called Kuki National Army has claimed responsibility for the incident.

The Myanmar officials had initially suggested a meeting between the Divisional Chairman of law and Order Restoration Council of Sagaing Division of Myanmar and Chief Minister of Manipur. After further consultations, a meeting was held on October 15 between the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police, Chandel District of Manipur on the Indian side and Chairman, District Law and Order Restoration Council on the Myanmar side. During the meeting, the Myanmar delegation requested the Indian side to identify the culprits for taking further necessary action against them.

The State Government of Manipur have instructed the district authorities to investigate the case so as to bring the culprits to book if they are on the Indian soil and to ensure maintenance of peace and tranquility in the area.

Government of India are committed to ensuring that there is peace and normalcy and that border trade between India and Myanmar is allowed to continue uninterrupted.

Improvement in relations between India and Pakistan

939. SHRI AKHILESH DAS: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the next round of Foreign Secretary level talks between India and Pakistan are scheduled to be held in December, 1997;

(b) if so, the issues proposed to be taken up; and

(c) the progress made so far in improvement of relations between the two countries?